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GOD, THE REFUGE OF HIS PEOPLE.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1850,

BEING A DAY OF

FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

BY WHITEFOORD SMITH, D. D.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
PRINTED BY A. S. JOHNSTON.

1850.

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EXTRACT

From the Message of his Excellency, W. B. Seabrook.

"In recommending, as I now do, that South Carolina should interpose her sovereignty in order to protect her citizens, and that by co-operation with her aggrieved sister States, she may be enabled to aid in averting the doom which impends over the civil institutions of the South, it is fit and proper that, as a Commonwealth, we should, at an early day, to be designated by you, implore the God of our fathers for the pardon of our manifold transgressions, and invoke his protection and guidance in this our day of trouble and affliction; that he would graciously vouchsafe to enlighten the minds of our Federal rulers, the North and its citizens, and direct them in the way of truth, of reason and of justice, and preserve a once happy political family from the unspeakable horrors of civil strife."

*From the Journal of the House of Representatives,
November 26, 1850.*

Mr. Memminger submitted the following Preamble and Resolutions, which were ordered to be considered immediately, and were agreed to:

Whereas, it becomes a Christian people, at all times to look to the King of Kings for guidance and direction, but more especially in seasons of trial and difficulty; and, whereas, the enactments of the last Congress of the United States have destroyed the equal rights of the Southern States, have invaded the peace and security of our homes, and must lead to an overthrow of the existing order of things: therefore,

Resolved, unanimously, That we recommend to the people of South Carolina, to set apart Friday, the 6th of December, as a day of fasting and humiliation, and that the Reverend Clergy throughout the State be invited to assemble their respective congregations on that day, to unite in prayer to Almighty God, that He may direct and aid this General Assembly in devising such means as will conduce to the best interests and welfare of our beloved State.

2. *Resolved, unanimously,* That religious services and a sermon appropriate to the occasion be had in the Hall of the House of Representatives, and that a fitting Clergyman be invited to officiate.

3. *Resolved, unanimously,* That a committee of three be appointed on the part of this House, and that a message be sent to the Senate proposing the appointment of a like Committee to meet the Committee of this House, for the purpose of carrying into effect these resolutions.

*From the Journal of the House of Representatives,
December 7, 1850.*

Mr. E. P. Jones submitted the following resolutions, which were ordered to be considered immediately, and were agreed to :

1. *Resolved,* That a copy of the able and eloquent discourse, delivered before the General Assembly, by the Rev. Whitefoord Smith, be requested of him for publication.

2. *Resolved,* That a committee of three, on the part of this house, be appointed to meet a similar committee on the part of the Senate, for the purpose of making the request, and directing the publication.

3. *Resolved,* That two thousand copies be published.

In the Senate, on the same day, the message of the House was concurred in, and Messrs. Moses, Manning, and Griffin appointed on the committee.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SENATE CHAMBER, }
Columbia, Dec. 10, 1850. }

Rev. Whitefoord Smith.

DEAR SIR :—We take pleasure in communicating, as a committee appointed for that purpose, the unanimous resolution of both Houses of the Legislature, requesting, for publication, a copy of your able, impressive and eloquent Sermon, delivered at the solicitation of the General Assembly of the State, on the day of fasting, humiliation and prayer.

In performing this duty, permit us to assure you of the high consideration with which we subscribe ourselves,

Very respectfully yours,

FRANKLIN J. MOSES,

Chair. of Senate Com.

E. P. JONES,

Chair. of House Com.

COLUMBIA, Dec. 10, 1850.

GENTLEMEN :—Your note of this date, conveying the request of the General Assembly of South Carolina, for a copy of the Sermon delivered before that body, on Friday, the 6th inst. for publication, is before me. I cannot forbear the expression of my profound gratitude for the kind manner in which the discourse has been received by the Legislature. The manuscript is placed at your disposal.

With the highest consideration,

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Yours, &c.

WHITEFOORD SMITH.

To the Hon. F. J. MOSES, }
E. P. JONES, and others, } *Committee.*

SERMON.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. PSALMS. XLVI. 1, 2, 3, and 11.

Never, in the history of our State, have our people been called to the observance of a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, under circumstances so peculiar and critical, as those which now surround us.

For near three quarters of a century our country has enjoyed a state of almost uninterrupted internal tranquility, and pursued her steady and onward course towards that point of greatness and glory to which the Providence of God had called her. In the legitimate exercise of the functions of government, there seemed nothing to retard her progress, and the eye of hope was already dazzled with the splendor of the future, while anticipating the development of her illimitable resources. The capability of man for self-government was the theme of the proud American, as he pointed to each bright page of his country's history, rendered illustrious by acts of patriotism which claimed the admiration of the world. No scenes of moral sublimity had Time's long calendar chronicled, grander than the Declaration of American Independence, and the adoption of our Federal Constitution. No name shone brighter on the roll which fame had

made immortal, than that of the Christian Washington. The future was radiant with the reflection of the past, and down the long vista of coming years, the sanguine could already discern the last-born star of the political firmament, outshining every sister planet, and reigning "lord of the ascendant."

But it is not to be disguised that all these bright hopes have become clouded—that the most serious dissensions have arisen among us—and that while we are at peace with all the foreign powers of the world, we are the subjects of an internal convulsion which threatens the overthrow of our government. There is reason to apprehend that the confederated States of this Union,

"That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Shall, in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When Heaven was all tranquility."

At such a time, when such dangers threaten us, nothing surely can be more appropriate and becoming than that, as a Christian people, we should recognize the supreme control of God, and with a true and sincere humiliation, present ourselves before the Throne of Grace, to ask the guidance of the All-wise, the support of the Almighty.

While the perilous condition of our country is of itself sufficient to justify the appointment you have made of this day for fasting, humiliation and prayer, the sable drapery of these halls of legislation admonishes us that South Carolina has other griefs, which should lay her in the dust before God.

For many years past, in every exigency of her history, she has been accustomed to turn her eyes to that favored son, whose wisdom and far-seeing sagacity pre-eminently qualified him to direct the public mind, and upon whose virtue and firmness she leaned as on the pillar of her strength. But in vain do we look to meet the glance of that piercing eye—in vain do we listen for the commanding tones of that unfaltering voice—in vain do we seek the motion of that hand which always pointed out

the path of duty and of honour. Carolina's long-loved son is gone,

“Like a summer-dried fountain
When our need was the sorest.”

The flowers on his tomb are yet scarcely withered—the eyes that wept for him are yet moistened with tears—the hearts that bled at his departure are not yet healed. But alas ! he is gone. And while the cry of his own dear State is rallying her sons to the rescue, he, who was ever foremost to answer to her call, comes not now.

“He sleeps his last sleep, he has fought his last battle,
No sound shall awake him to glory again.”

Strange and mysterious was the dispensation of Providence which removed him from us at such a time. But like the Hebrew Prophet, who had led his people through all the intricacies of the wilderness and the perils of the desert, till they were in sight of the promised land, yet was not permitted to enter that land and head their hosts in battle with their foes ; so our illustrious statesman, who for years had predicted the coming of this day and of these events, was only allowed to guide us to the passage of this Jordan, and then his work was done. May He who has taken away our Moses, give us another Joshua !

Nor while we visit with tears the grave of our CALHOUN, can we forget that he who was called to succeed him in the high honours of the Senatorial office, has likewise followed him with rapid step to the grave.

From our Judiciary, also, in the last twelve-month, have been removed two bright luminaries of the law ; one in the maturity of years and honours, the other in the meridian of life and usefulness. A visitation so extraordinary may well be expected to produce the deepest impression. While we are thus solemnly reminded of the uncertainty and frailty of all human dependence, it becomes us to put our trust in Him who is the rock and the refuge of his people. Surely Heaven could scarce address

us in plainer or in louder tones, commanding us to cease from man, and to make God the only object of our faith.

It is a practice sanctioned by a high antiquity, and commended by every consideration both of reason and religion, that a people, in any crisis of their history, should turn their thoughts to God. Even heathen nations, whose brightest illuminations were but the indistinct lights of natural religion, acknowledged this propriety. Political disasters were followed by sacrifices and humiliation; and difficulties were solved, and perplexities relieved, by consulting the oracles of their gods. And surely nothing is more fitting to a Christian people, bowed under the weight of manifold afflictions, than a true and penitent humiliation—nothing more proper to them, when surrounded by peril, than acts of supplication and prayer. And let it be distinctly remembered, that we claim to be a Christian people.

The causes which have led to the existing crisis in our public affairs, have been often superficially and imperfectly considered. By forgetting our relation to God as a Christian nation, we lose sight of moral causes, and turn our eyes only to external and political ones. He who supposes that all the excitement and danger which now pervade our land are the result of abolitionism alone, has not thoroughly explored the subject, and has formed a very inadequate conception of the evil. The disposition to interfere with the slave institutions of the South, is but one of the ebullitions of a spirit of insubordination and lawlessness, of infidelity and atheism. In the eyes of this fanaticism, the rights of the South are as sacred as those of the North. But to it, *no rights are sacred*. The law and revealed will of God have declared it to be consistent with his moral government and wise purposes, that differences should exist in human fortunes; that there should be rich and poor, high and low, bond and free. It is in antagonism to these great principles of our holy religion, that the wild passions of the godless are arrayed. In their esteem, a Bible, which proclaims the right of one man to a larger possession than another, is a cheat, an imposition, a cunningly devised fable. A God who should order such unequal-

ities in the temporal condition of men, is no God. Religion, therefore, they consider priestcraft—revelation a shameless imposture—the God of the Bible their sworn and bitter foe. They may not yet have gathered the strength and courage necessary for so open an avowal of their views and designs, or, with a cunning policy, they may be biding their time for the declaration; but when the one or the other shall justify the announcement, the war-cry of their ranks will be *universal equality and no religion*—their oriflamme, *the bloody flag*.

When that day shall come, which to all appearance is fast approaching, they who now, instead of supporting the Constitution and laws of our Government, either passively look on at this gathering storm of human passion, or seek to direct it hither for their own security, will be the first victims of its violence. For, let them not suppose that the infuriate mob will desire to seek their homes amid the malaria of southern swamps, when they can so easily avail themselves of a nearer possession in the beautiful villas of the Hudson and the Delaware.

It is, unfortunately, too common, to confound the religious freedom which our Constitution secures to every man, with infidelity and atheism; to suppose, because we repudiate Church establishments, we acknowledge no religion. Nothing can be more false in fact—nothing more fatal in practice. The laws and institutions of our land are all avowedly Christian. While pre-eminence is given to no particular church or denomination—while no religious tests of conformity or orthodoxy are demanded—while freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, is guaranteed to every man—yet still we claim to be a Christian people. What means the adjournment of this General Assembly from Saturday to Monday, but the recognition of the Christian Sabbath? What arguments have we for the protection of our rights of property, that are not founded on the Christian Revelation? What insurmountable barrier do we present against the pretended philanthropy of those who would overturn our domestic institutions, but the living oracles of God?

It may well constitute a subject of humiliation to us on this

day, that, in this particular, our practice has been so far beneath our creed. We can scarcely suppose that any intelligent citizen of this State can be found, who would be willing to imitate unhappy France in her bloody revolution, either in the repudiation of religion, or in the general and authorized profanation of the Sabbath. Yet, how frequently it happens, that those who shudder at the thought of what would be the result of a general and legalized act, seem unconscious of the evil of an individual or partial dereliction !

Think not, Legislators of South Carolina, when a portion of your fellow-citizens appeal to you in petitions for the suppression of immoralities and the prevention of violations of the Divine Law, that it is with any disposition to coerce their neighbors into the practice of religion by the civil power. The idea of conversion by force is the exploded theory of a bye-gone age. But it is because, with the spirit of true patriotism, they look upon this as a Christian State ; and they would have all its statutes built upon a sure and permanent foundation. They believe that a due respect to God's laws is the certain way to secure his favor for their land—to promote its prosperity—to augment its glory.— They have learned, as well from the history of all the kingdoms of the earth, as from the inspired record, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." And when the day of invasion or peril shall come, they would gird on the harness of war, not trembling with fear, the first-born child of guilt ; but triumphant in hope, the fruit of confidence in God. They would answer the reproachful addresses of their foes in the language of the once happy Israel to the haughty Assyrian :

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn ; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ; and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high ? Even against the Holy One of Israel."

Since, however, the peculiar domestic institution of the South is made the ostensible cause for all the wrongs of which we complain in the Federal legislation of our country, let us turn our

attention to it briefly. As Christians, we are called to admit that all things are under the special, superintending providence of God. We shall not go back to trace the origin and history of slavery through the patriarchal and prophetic ages, nor stop to note its Divine recognition in the dispensation of God's chosen people. These are matters too patent and indisputable to be questioned even by its most relentless opponents. But the horrors of the slave-trade have furnished a copious theme for philanthropic declamation, while the barbarism and cannibalism of the untaught African have been always overlooked. Can we doubt that the hand of God was mighty enough to have prevented all this inhumanity, if his providence had no purposes of mercy and wisdom to serve in the permission of a temporary evil to effect an ultimate and incalculable good? And if we could dispossess our minds of those prejudices which warp our better judgment, and look rather to the way in which God brings good out of seeming evil, to what different conclusions should we come, than when, following the blindness of our own reason and passions, we undertake to challenge His justice and goodness? If we form our opinions of good and evil, not according to principles of worldly expediency, but, as Christians ought to do, according to the word of God, considering a future life as well as the present, can there be any question that the negro race among us, under all the supposed disadvantages of slavery, are happier than were their fathers in their native land, or than they themselves could be in any place or in any condition that is really practicable? They who make slavery a cause of offence, fight not against us, but against God. Who, in the creation, formed these lands and suited them to that peculiar culture which makes their product the great staple of the world? Who, of all the various tribes of men, has adapted this peculiar people to this climate and fitted them for this very toil? Who, in his own infinite wisdom, gave those rules for the regulation of this relation, so that it might be a blessing both to the master and his slave? Who has caused, in the last twenty years, a spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice in the hearts of good men, and led them to con-

secrete themselves to the great work of evangelizing and saving this portion of the human family? Who has crowned these Christian labors with such eminent success, unparalleled in the history of modern missions, so that in our own State alone, more than fifty thousand of these very people are in the communion of His Church?

And what is it that these sworn foes to slavery desire to do?—Is it to place the negro race in a better condition, civilly, politically, or religiously? Have they not written their own hypocrisy in capitals before the world, by forbidding their entrance into many of their States? And in those free States, where a scattered remnant of them still survive, are they not “the most degraded, under-foot, down-trodden,” victims of inhumanity? What would they come to teach them? Is it contentment, and peace and piety? What text-book would they give them? Is it the Bible? No, no! They would come only to desolate and to blight. Under a pretence of religion, they would institute “A HIGHER LAW.” Under the pretended sanction of the Gospel of peace, they would light up the fires of an exterminating war. Under the affectation of Christianity, they would teach the doctrines of devils.

Some of the more moderate and thoughtful among those who array themselves against us on this subject, profess an unwillingness to interrupt by force our existing relations, but at the same time desire to effect a peaceful change in public sentiment among us. Ignorant of the true state of things, and misled by imaginary evils, they would teach us a better way. To all such offers, “be our plain answer this: The laws we reverence are our brave fathers’ legacy—the faith we follow, teaches us to live in bonds of charity with all mankind, and die with hope of bliss beyond the grave. We seek no change; and, least of all, such change as they would bring us.”

There is a singular fact connected with the history of slavery among us, which seems to have escaped public notice, and which conveys a most important moral lesson. In the early periods of

our history, this institution was viewed at the South with an evil eye. It was commonly regarded as a hindrance to the prosperity of those States in which it existed. So common was this feeling at the South, that many of our youth were sent for their education into the free States. Thousands who were born and reared among us, looked forward with hope to the day when we should be able to rid ourselves of a slave population, and when our territory should become the abode only of the free. At this time, there existed among this great body of people no christian missions. They lived and died in as utter heathenism, as did their pagan progenitors. No man cared for their souls. To speak, therefore, of their emancipation, was to address the philanthropy and christian feeling of the human heart.

A little more than twenty years ago, attention was first turned to their religious culture. It was remembered that they were human beings—that though they were our property, they were also our fellow-creatures. It was discovered that their oral instruction in the elementary principles of practical and experimental religion, was compatible with the public safety, and even tributary to the master's interest. To our own State belongs the honour of having originated this enterprise, and it stands associated with a name of which South Carolina has always been proud. Since that time, in many of the slaveholding States, the different churches have engaged in the work of teaching them their moral responsibility, their duty to God, and to their masters.

Now, mark in this, the hand of a wise and gracious God, accomplishing his own designs in ways we had not known. Had the torrent of fanaticism which now threatens to desolate the land, come upon us and found us unprepared—had we no moral and religious barrier to interpose against this professed philanthropy—its progress had been irresistible. The great mass of Christians in the slave States would have been paralyzed—the public sentiment among ourselves would, in all probability, have been greatly divided—and no unanimous concurrence of our people could have been expected in its defence, when the institution

was regarded only as a political one, and, by many, considered as an evil.

But the public mind has now received another direction. Missionary efforts for the salvation of the negro race have turned the attention of Christians to the more calm and correct appreciation of slavery. They found the authority for its existence in the Bible—they discovered its obligations and duties sanctioned by a Divine Revelation. The more its discomforts and inconveniences were modified and alleviated, the firmer hold did it take upon every Christian heart. And when the battle-cry of fanaticism was raised in its first serious attack upon the slave institution, its first bold repulse was from the Christian church, whose adamantine fortification was the Word of God !

This was no "*odium theologicum*." The question at issue was no metaphysical point of speculative theology. It was a question of practical religion, grave in its character, momentous in its consequences. And the Southern Church occupied the platform which inspiration had laid, when, with the spirit of prophecy, it foresaw the licentiousness of later times. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren ; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil-surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness : from such withdraw thyself."

And now, hallowed by this sacred connection, and assured of the righteousness of our cause, and of the promised protection and blessing of Heaven, the Christians are among the foremost

OF HIS PEOPLE.

to plant themselves in the breach, and to defend with their lives this institution of God and our fathers.

What could more powerfully enforce the salutary lesson, that the faithful fulfilment of the duties involved in this relation is the best security for its preservation ; and that the only danger to be apprehended in connection with it, is the want of fidelity to our stewardship ! Look around through all the slave States, and you shall find that wherever the greatest attention has been paid to the moral duties of this relation, there, the greatest unanimity exists, and the loftiest courage is exhibited in its defence.

No apology will be needed for having occupied your attention so long on this topic. It is well that on so solemn an occasion our conscientious conviction of the rectitude of our cause should be declared before the world. And it is likewise most proper that we should know whether we have a right to expect the Divine blessing, which this day has been specially set apart to seek. If our cause be an unjust and sinful one, our humiliation and prayers shall be all in vain. For, as saith the Psalmist, "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." But if, on the contrary, we are assured of its righteousness—if we can appeal to the Searcher of hearts for our sincerity and integrity—if what we defend is the institution of God, and consistent with his revealed will, then we know that our prayers shall be answered and the Divine blessing be given.

But although the justice of our cause may well embolden us, yet is this day most properly consecrated to humiliation and prayer. We have many sins for which to mourn and repent. Let us not indulge in a spirit of pride and vain-boasting, but examine wherein we have failed of our duty to God. It is not the rage and malice of our enemies we have to fear. We have a conscience void of offence towards them. We have not wronged them ; we have not deserted them in the time of their need ; we have not sought their hurt. But our only fear is that we have provoked the displeasure of our Heavenly Father, by neglecting his commands, and being too forgetful of Him—that in the pride and fulness of our hearts, we have lost sight of our dependence upon Him. Let us

return unto Him with penitence and tears. Let us rend our hearts and not our garments, and put away all evil from us, and in sincerity and truth devote ourselves to Him. Let us remember the Sabbath He hath sanctified, and keep it holy. Let us meet the high responsibilities of a Christian people with cheerful and willing hearts. Oh! I would that He who looketh into all hearts might behold in every one of us to-day, and in all our people who are surrounding his altars, the spirit of a true contrition and of a living faith! Oh! I would to Heaven that this day's acts of penitence and prayer might come before the mercy-seat as an acceptable offering, the odour of a sacrifice pleasing to God! Oh! that there might follow this day's humiliation, such an effusion of the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind, as should inspire our people with a moral courage, adequate not only to the necessity of these times, but of all times; such a spirit of rejoicing and heavenly triumph, as neither danger can disturb, nor disaster overcome, nor death destroy. Then should there be heard the shout of a King in the camp, and the people of the Lord should do valiantly.

Let it be deeply impressed upon our minds, how insufficient is human wisdom, how inadequate human power, to achieve anything of itself, without the aid of God. It is too common for men to rely upon themselves more than upon God. This is perhaps one of the abuses we make of our moral agency. It is true that we are not to neglect the right and proper means for the accomplishment of an end, but the best and most efficient means may be utterly unavailing, when, depending on them alone, we refuse to put our trust in the Lord. The secret spring of all moral power is faith in God.

It were falling infinitely below this great occasion, and losing sight of the moral issues it involves, if we should place our security and trust in any other than an Almighty arm. We claim that our cause is the cause of justice and of truth. We appeal to God, as did our fathers in the darkest days of their peril, for support; and we believe that He will guide us safely through. But let us not anticipate his time, nor, by any rash precipitancy

of our own, take our cause out of his hands. Human pride is human weakness. Our sufficiency is of God. If we entrust our cause to him, our steps shall be ordered surely. Cast your eyes around you, and ask, if we were disposed to lean upon earthly aid, whence is that aid to come? Yet, this need not intimidate us. For, what though we were deserted by men? What though the world were in arms against us? Has God never delivered his people under circumstances as threatening and desperate as even these would be? Man's extremity has always been God's opportunity. And if we had not a hand to lift for our defence, the voice Almighty might be heard, bidding us, "stand still, and see the salvation of God."

"Lo! to faith's enlighten'd sight,
All the mountain flames with light,
Hell is nigh, but God is nigher,
Circling us with hosts of fire."

While prayer cannot sanctify that which is unholy in principle, yet how great is its advantage, when the object of the prayer is good. How powerful, then, should be the influence of this day's service upon all our hearts. "For, if God be for us, who shall be against us?" It becomes those who are supported by such high considerations, to be above all petty heats of passion—to repose with a steady confidence on God—to deliberate calmly—to act courageously. In all we purpose and in all we do, let the fear of God be before our eyes, but not the fear of man. For, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; but the fear of man bringeth a snare.

Through the length and breadth of the land, too, it shall be told, that South Carolina is not engaged in an unhallowed cause. It shall be known, that she has taken no step, engaged herself to no line of action, until she had asked direction of Heaven, and committed her cause to Him that judgeth righteously. But let us not forget, that when we come to place ourselves under Divine guidance, and to seek illumination from above, we should dispossess our minds of all antecedent prejudices. and sincerely implore Almighty God to show us the way in which He would

have us go. It may not comport with His will, to work out our deliverance in the way we might desire. And it would be impious in us, while asking his counsel, to be determined to pursue the course which our prejudices or passions might prefer. It has been frequent in the history of nations and of men, that the ways in which He has wrought out the deliverance of his people, have been very different from those which they anticipated. We are taught to pray, "Thy will be done."

Whether it shall please Him to interpose at this time, for our deliverance, by producing a revolution in public opinion throughout the land, making even our enemies to be at peace with us; or, by some signal judgment upon those who persecute us, manifesting the strength of his displeasure; or, by cursing them with a mental blindness, that by farther aggressions they may drive the most tardy and timid into a ready co-operation with us—whether He shall be pleased that this Confederacy of States shall still continue, with the wrongs of which we complain redressed, and with a Constitution rescued from the dust, and environed around with new securities—or, whether it shall be His will that the bonds which have united us shall be severed, and new combinations formed; all these should be left in His hands. Nothing is beyond the reach of His power.

We have not been nursed in the lap of Christianity, and taught the Bible from our infancy, without learning that it is not with the Lord to save by many or by few. It is not numbers which constitute right; neither in morals, do numbers constitute might. A firm and true reliance upon God is worth more than a Macedonian phalanx. A secret and lurking infidelity in our hearts may say, the age of miracles is gone. But a living faith confesses no abatement of Jehovah's power. Under the protection of that power, we place ourselves to-day. We cannot tell, in the boding future, through what dark scenes our path may lie. We know not who may survive to witness the triumphs of constitutional freedom. But, come what may, in weal or in woe, this shall be our rejoicing, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Whatever insignia may wave over the

bannered hosts of other States, let the glorious and encouraging motto on our flag be this : "The Lord of Hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

Gentlemen of the Senate

and House of Representatives :

You occupy this day the most honourable, and yet, the most responsible position which it is possible for men to hold. In your hands, under God, are our destinies, and the destinies of our wives, and children, and servants. The eyes of your fellow-citizens are upon you, awaiting, with intensest interest, your action. Our State has been traduced and mocked, as rash and hasty.—No efforts have been spared to wean from her the support and co-operation of her sister States of the South. Her chivalry has been made a bye-word of reproach. Her nice and delicate sense of her constitutional rights, has been distorted into disaffection to the Union. Her avowed determination to maintain those rights "at any and every hazard," has been met by threats of coercion, if she dare resist. Every thing has been done that could be done to provoke your wrath, and urge you to an impetuous and precipitate act. You understand the design, and hitherto, South Carolina has taken no step which she has had to retrace. You know full well that a constitutional revolution is not the work of a day. They who desire our destruction would rejoice to force you into a wrong position. Let them find that your indomitable courage is tempered by a wise discretion.

When you adopted the resolutions by which this day was set apart for these religious purposes—when you invited the ministrations of religion to hallow your deliberations, and called upon the whole people of our State to unite with you in prayer to God in this great emergency ; you sent a thrill of joy through every Christian heart, and inspired hope and confidence in the breasts of us all. Then we saw that our Legislators were placing us "*rectus in curia*" before the world—that you were recognizing your dependance, and ours, upon God—that you were taking coun-

sel where wisdom dwelt, and seeking alliance with a mightier power than all the kings of earth.

And how encouraging to your own hearts must be the thought, that, united with you in spirit to-day around the throne of the heavenly mercy, are the people you represent, and supplications are ascending for you from thousands of souls—that infancy, in timid accents, is lisping its early prayer ; and old age, trembling under its infirmities, commends you to God ; and female tenderness, with its accustomed faith, implores on you the blessing of Heaven ; while manhood adds all its strength to the general intercession.

And may we not suppose that the knowledge of this day's transactions shall have its effect far beyond the borders of our own State ? May not God make the position of a praying people terrible to their foes ? May not the dark clouds which have hung portentously over our sky, be removed by an Almighty Hand ? The attitude in which you have placed yourselves by this day's proceedings shall reflect honour on your names among the generations to come. For it declares that, while you fear no earthly power, you own subjection and fealty to the King of Kings.

Gentlemen, to the best of my humble abilities, I have performed the duty with which your kindness has honoured me. I have endeavored cautiously to abstain from dictating to you in those things which are legitimately confided to your hands, as the Representatives of the people of South Carolina. I have only sought to point you to the true source of wisdom, to the fountain of all grace and good. And now, I commend you to God. May He enable you so to direct our ship of State through all the perils of the present storm, that she may gallantly ride each heaving billow, and find safe anchorage in the Port of Peace ! Amen.





WERT
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Grantville, Pa
Jan Feb 1989
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